
ICT INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Don Bristow, Resource Management Portfolio

Responsible Director – Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Cabinet of the scheme's proposals and request release of funding.

Information and Analysis

Description of Scheme

2. The primary aim of this scheme is to upgrade and migrate Council's aging and now obsolete Server Infrastructure to the latest versions of software and also enhance the existing e-mail system by increasing its resilience and extending its functionality.
3. The scheme was approved by Council on 9th March 2006 as part of the Capital Programme.
4. The current network operating system used at the Council is based on Windows NT 4 server. This is the system that manages all of the network accounts, provides authentication when someone logs onto the system and controls permissions when users attempt to access files and directories held on network servers. Windows NT4 was introduced in 1997 and is now 9 years old, which is extremely old for any item of software.
5. The current e-mail server is Exchange 5.5 Server, which was released in 1997 and is also 9 years old. E-mail is now an essential tool for the Council and the necessity for it to communicate with the external Internet means that it is vulnerable to network security threats such as viruses and spam e-mails.
6. Due to the age of the software versions Microsoft has declared that Windows NT 4 and Exchange 5.5 are now obsolete and will no longer offer support for these products. This is a major concern as no further updates or security patches will be produced. This will leave the Council's servers vulnerable to security threats such as the viruses. Due to the obsolescence of Exchange 5.5, suppliers of anti-virus and anti-spam solutions are also likely to withdraw support for the product, eventually leaving the council without defence against these problems.
7. There are also an increasing number of software compatibility issues being raised as a result of the aging infrastructure. The Council relies heavily on packaged software solutions and many software vendors are also removing support from these older versions of software

Other Options Considered

8. A lesser option was considered by the Corporate ICT Working Group whereby we could have migrated to Windows 2000 Server and Exchange 2000 server but this was dismissed as we would soon be faced with the same issues again when those software versions also become obsolete. It was therefore agreed to migrate to more current versions of the Microsoft operating system software.

Objectives and Outcomes of the Scheme Including Performance Measures

9. The main objectives of the scheme are as follows;

To migrate all of the current Microsoft servers to Microsoft Server 2003 version

To migrate to Active Directory

To migrate to Microsoft Exchange 2003 version

To Increase the reliability and availability of the e-mail and schedule system

To provide extended functionality such as improved remote access to the Council systems (e-mail initially)

10. The output of the scheme will contribute to a number of the Council strategies.

- (a) Leading edge. This scheme is regarded as an essential building block which is necessary to ensure we keep pace with technology and provide a sound platform to build robust solutions to support the ICT requirement which are expected to come from many leading edge projects. An example is the provision of mobile & remote working for Street Scene
- (b) ICT Strategy. The need to ensure that we have a robust and secure platform in place in order to minimise disruption to Council Services. We need to plan for developing and emerging technologies. We also need to ensure that our infrastructure is compatible with any new systems which will be implemented in the future
- (c) Service Planning. This scheme is identified and contained within the Corporate Services Service Plan for 2006.
- (d) Performance Indicators. ICT services currently have a local performance indicator which measures the availability of the Councils primary ICT systems. This scheme will make a positive contribution to this measure by increasing the reliability and availability of systems.

Delivery of the Project

11. The project will be delivered in the following way.

- (a) Timescale. The project will be scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2007.

- (b) Milestones

September 2006	Consultants started some preliminary work to scope project
October 2006	Quotations received
December 2006	Cabinet requested to release funds
December 2006	Orders placed for hardware, software & Licenses

December 2006	Active Directory migration –phase 1
January 2007	Active Directory migration - phase 2
February 2007	Upgrade to Exchange 2003
March 2007	Projection completion

- (c) The project will be managed by the Councils ICT Infrastructure Manager
- (d) As there are a number of discrete requirements it was expected that individual components would not exceed the tender threshold. Therefore in line with Financial regulations and the Councils standing orders, quotations from 4 suppliers were sought for Hardware, licenses and consultancy services

Future Revenue Costs

- 12. There will be an ongoing revenue cost of £5,000 for maintenance of the new infrastructure. It is expected that this will be managed within existing ICT budgets for server maintenance

Total Cost of the Scheme and How it will be Funded

- 13. The following table provides a breakdown of the cost and funding requirement of the scheme

Scheme Name			
Budget		Funding	
Type of Expenditure	Budget £	Source	Amount £
Hardware requirements	40,000	Corporate Resources	130,000
Software & Licenses	45,000		
Prof Fees (Int & Ext)	40,000		
Contingency	5,000		
etc			
Total	130,000	Total	130,000

Specific Risks of this Scheme and Control Measures in Place to Reduce these Risks

- 14. The risks of the scheme are mainly technical in nature. This is a large-scale migration and needs to be carefully planned. In addition it is a technically complex project. For these reasons external consultants will be used to plan and assist with the project. These will be shadowed by the Councils ICT staff in order to benefit from a transfer of skills. We will also take out a support contract with the external consultants in order assist with any ongoing issues once the project is complete. As new hardware is required for the main Servers, this will be built in situ alongside the existing system. This will ensure a relatively smooth transition once adequate testing has taken place and help to minimise any possible disruption.

Outcome of Consultation

15. Advice was sought from a number of potential consultants to help plan and assist with the migration. The supplier chosen to assist with the project provided the most detail regarding how the migration would be achieved with minimal disruption to services. The confidence level was also raised as the same supplier had recently completed exactly the same type of work at Stockton BC. It was felt that this would also be beneficial should the possible shared service partnership come to fruition as the supplier would have knowledge of both Councils ICT infrastructures.

Legal Implications

16. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

17. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

18. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

19. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendation

20. It is recommended that Cabinet agree to the release of £130,000 from Council Resources to support the scheme

Reasons

21. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) The need to upgrade the server Infrastructure in order to protect against obsolescence, compatibility problems with new systems and hardware, and increasing security risks associated with unsupported products.
- (b) To provide a robust server infrastructure to support The Councils Services and many emerging ICT requirements from programmes such as Leading edge

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

B. Darby : Extension 2370